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## Expert's take: Illegals pouring into US

By Teresa Mull

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President Obama already threatened to take executive action to pass immigration reform. Now, as thousands of minors cross into the United States illegally, the US immigration system is reportedly being pushed “to its breaking point.”

Alex Nowrasteh, immigration policy analyst at the Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, spoke to *HE* about the situation:

***What is the situation on our borders? Thousands of illegal immigrants are reportedly pouring in across our borders; how is this happening and why?***

There are thousands of unauthorized immigrants coming across the border and this year will likely see an increase over next year – but this is not a crisis. Keep in perspective that based on history, the number of illegal immigrants who will be apprehended this year is still similar to the low numbers apprehended in the mid-1970s and just a fraction of the number apprehended ten years ago. If the current situation is a crisis, then illegal immigration from the late-1970s to 2007 could only be described as apocalyptic – which is obviously incorrect because reporters don't write stories about apocalyptic events after they happen. Because flows of unauthorized immigration have been so low in recent years, the current situation seems like a big increase, but it is still fairly small historically. A little historical perspective and less hyperbole over this recent increase in undocumented youth immigration is in order. Children coming in large numbers is what separates this flow from previous flows, not the numbers by themselves.

***What are the likely repercussions of this trend for Americans here legally, and for the Obama Administration?***

According to a 2008 law, the undocumented minors will either be resettled here or sent back home. This will cost taxpayers some money in the short run, but the government could cut that cost right now by expanding lawful immigration opportunities for migrants from those countries, allowing their parents to come legally, work, and support the children. The reason illegal immigrants come illegally is that it is impossible for them to come legally. Fixing the legal immigration system will remove this problem going forward.

***What, in your opinion, is the best solution for handling this problem?***

Increase lawful immigration opportunities for poor folks from Central and South America. That will immediately remove the incentive for families in bad situations to split up, allow migrants to

be self-supporting workers, and allow the border patrol to focus on actual security threats rather than apprehending children. Every minute spent on rounding up children is a minute that should have been devoted to actual security and criminal threats.